# The Black Cat

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**A Corner on Hades**
Edgar G. Banks

**On Purple Mountain**
H. G. Noé

**A Mid-Sea Dilemma**
A. H. Morino

**The Devil's Eye**
L. G. Powers

**The Unwritten Law**
Mary Morrison

**The Fatal Spell of Noah Webster**
Ellis Meredith

**The Shirt-Maker**
Don Mark Lemon

**Catechisms**

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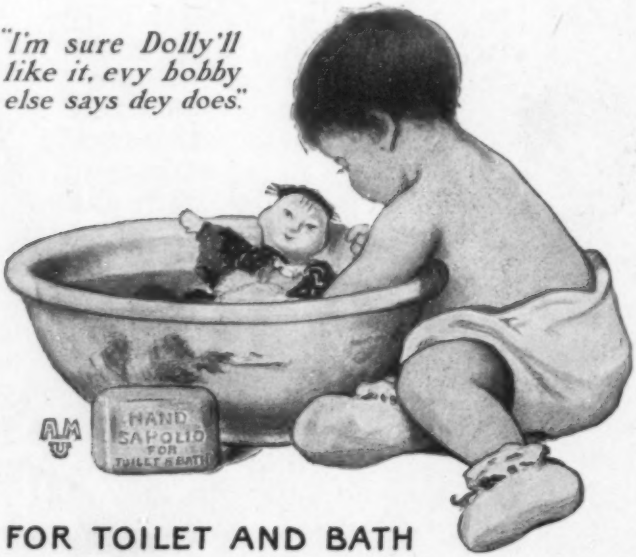
*It must be*

# HAND SAPOLIO

If Suki-San is to have an "honorable bath"

*"I'm sure Dolly'll like it, evy bobby else says dey does."*

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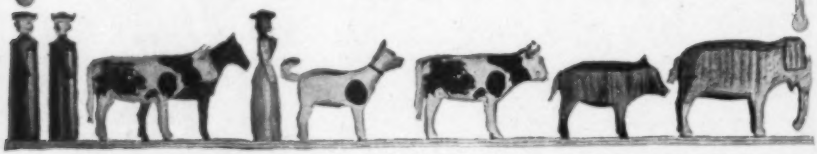

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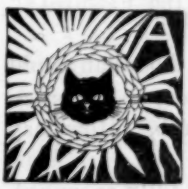
## A Corner on Hades.*

BY EDGAR J. BANKS.



ABDULLAH was a Moslem priest whose hair had long been gray with age. Behind him lay a long life of strenuous thought, — thought not so much for the spiritual welfare of the Moslems in his charge, as for the increase of his worldly gains; now he passed the greater part of his days, from morning till night, almost motionless on the divan of his one bare chamber, sadly contemplating the white-washed walls of mud and the dirt floor, which were the constant reminders of his unrealized ambitions. Apart from his simple duties at the mosque, his chief occupation, and his only solace during the long hours of solitude, was to conjure up the visions of the great wealth of which he dreamed when a youth. Even still he thought and schemed to improve his condition, yet each scheme failed and left him poorer than ever. Before him he could see only increasing poverty, and at the end of it all was a pauper's grave.

Such were his meditations when they were interrupted by the appearance of a form in the doorway. At his words of welcome, an Arab pilgrim whose body was wrapped in a loose, colorless

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gown, and with face half concealed by a *kefier,* approached. Abdullah clapped his hands to summon a servant with coffee for his guest, and tossing the Arab a cigarette, he silently waited to learn the object of his visit. The Arab explained that he was a pilgrim journeying across the desert to the sacred city of Mecca; he had stopped on the way to pay his respects to the aged priest, and to discuss the questions which had been disturbing the peace of his mind.

Although Abdullah could foresee no pecuniary returns for the theological instruction demanded, he withheld none of his store of wisdom. He freely explained the mysteries of Paradise, and, when knowledge from books failed him, he supplied the information from his own fertile brain. He named the streets of heaven, and described the crystal palaces which the souls of the Faithful shall occupy. The Arab, intently listening to the answers of his questions, now and then interrupted them with others.

"How are the homes in Paradise assigned to the Faithful?" he asked.

It would indeed be a difficult question which Abdullah could not answer, and his reply to this one was satisfactory to his guest.

"Tell me, learned Abdullah," continued the Arab, "How may I secure a desirable home in Paradise?"

It was a question which the priest might have readily answered, yet he hesitated. Suddenly his old, faded eyes lighted up, and he sat completely lost in thought, staring into space. The Arab, supposing that his question had not been understood, repeated it.

"Yes, yes," exclaimed the excited Abdullah, "when you return from the holy Mecca, come to me, and I shall have for you a place in Paradise."

The question of the Arab was the germ which in the mind of the priest evolved itself into a new and wonderful scheme, and the youthful visions of great wealth suddenly returned again. Long after the Arab had departed, Abdullah was still sitting on his divan. "If the Arab would have a home in Paradise," he mused aloud, "why should I not sell him one?" In an instant his plans were formed, and he excitedly clapped his hands to summon the servant.

"Paper and ink," he shouted to the approaching domestic. All

that night, by the light of a little olive oil lamp, the priest was drawing upon the paper lines and plans, — plans of the streets of Paradise. When the morning light crept through the door-way of his windowless chamber, he was still bending over the paper. There were no more idle hours. Night and day he worked — there was hardly time for food and sleep. After a week of such industry, Abdullah gazed with admiration upon the completed work before him. Though he was neither engineer nor draughtsman, he had drawn a plan of the streets and avenues of Paradise. The blocks he had divided into building lots, each with its measurements well defined. Paradise, he had always taught, was a place without limit, and so were his plans, for they were capable of endless expansion — there were building lots sufficient for all the faithful then living, or who were yet to come. If Paradise had always been a mysterious place, beyond the clouds, it should be so no longer, for every part of it was delineated that all might study it. An imposing seal, with which to stamp the deed of every lot, was procured, and Abdullah, the agent of Allah, the dispenser of Celestial real estate to all the Faithful, awaited his first customer.

Abdullah's discourse to the pious Moslems who had gathered about him in the mosque on the following Friday, was full of eloquence. It described the revelation which Allah had imparted to him as his favorite priest, and then it naturally led up to the climax, to the sale of home sites in Paradise. In short, he had been commissioned to assign to all the Faithful who applied, a portion of Paradise for an eternal home. His words brought joy to the faces of the hearers; had not their own priest been honored with the revelation? and could not they all secure for themselves a bit of Paradise to be their very own forever? There was happiness in the village that day. The real estate business of Abdullah began with his inspiring discourse at the mosque. The Faithful flocked to his house, some to gaze upon the features of the favorite of Allah, others to be the first to make their purchases according to the special revelation. For their edification he spread before them the complicated charts of Paradise, so complicated that none, not even Abdullah himself, could understand them. "Wonderful! marvelous!" exclaimed the Moslems, as they blankly

gazed upon them. Had any doubted the reality of the revelation, the doubts would suddenly have vanished. No less marvelous than the charts was the impressive deed with its gorgeous green seal, which was presented to every purchaser. The villagers vied with each other in bringing their silver and gold to the priest, and when Abdullah retired that night, had they been listening at his door, they might have heard him chuckling over the proceeds of his first day's sales.

The report of Abdullah's special revelation spread rapidly, as news will spread in the desert. Pilgrims who were on their way to Mecca began to stop at the village to see the holy man, and to hear him speak, and though many who came continued on their journey poorer in this world's goods, they were really far richer, for they possessed a priceless treasure — a part of Paradise. With the days, the business increased, and the charges for the building lots grew apace. The prices of the plots were not fixed — they varied according to circumstances which only Abdullah knew. If the purchaser appeared to be a man of means, a corner lot was urged upon him for the insignificant sum of twenty liras ($88), and who would not pay that small amount for the eternal possession of a corner lot in Paradise? Other less desirable plots were sold to the less prosperous for smaller sums, and none were too poor to buy. The benevolent Abdullah explained that Allah, in his great mercy had commissioned him to sell standing room to those who could afford no more, and to the very poor, he was instructed to sell a little spot just large enough to serve as a resting place for a single foot; a few copper coins might purchase that. Thus the business and the fame, and incidentally the wealth, of Abdullah increased wonderfully. All who came left with the happy assurance that Paradise was theirs, and if ever doubts arose in their minds, they needed only to glance at the deed with the great green seal to convince themselves that they had standing room, at least for a single foot, in that happy land where they should spend eternity.

Thus Abdullah's prosperity continued, and soon it was whispered abroad that his riches were enormous. The rumor was but scandal, exclaimed the priest — there could be no profit in heavenly real estate, for the money which had been received was

hardly sufficient to cover the expenses and the cost of the deeds. The rumors, however, were persistent. One evening, as Abdullah was alone in his chamber, sipping his coffee and congratulating himself upon the unusual success of the day, a stranger entered, saluted, and squatted upon the ground before him. He had come to inquire if he might purchase the right to live in Paradise. Abdullah, recognizing the stranger as one of more than ordinary intelligence and means, spread out the map of Paradise before him, and explaining for the thousandth time how he had received his divine commission, placed his long finger upon a corner lot which, so he asserted, possessed unusual attractions; that lot, though its price was small, was not inferior to any in all the future world. The stranger hesitated as if in doubt, and Abdullah, now an expert salesman, was unable to persuade him to buy.

"Will you sell me a bit of Hades?" suddenly asked the stranger. "If you have been commissioned to sell Paradise to the Faithful, you must also have Hades in your control."

For a moment Abdullah was too surprised at the strange question to reply; it was beyond his comprehension how one could desire the eternal tortures of Hades when the beautiful Paradise was within his easy reach. Unwilling to acknowledge that Hades had not been entrusted to his care, and seeing a new, an unexpected source of income suddenly appear, he hesitated no longer.

"I am commissioned by Allah to represent also the interests of Hades," he solemnly replied. "It is in my power to convey to you as little or as much of the accursed place as you may care to possess, but think well before you make the purchase."

The only reply which Abdullah's disparaging remark elicited was a repetition of the request for a bit of Hades; the stranger would have none of Paradise.

Perhaps the pious priest, zealous in the cause of Allah, was a bit offended at the reflection cast upon Paradise. The slight nettled him, and after all, Hades might be good enough for one so impious.

"Yes, I will sell you Hades," said Abdullah, "as much of it as you desire; few care for its tortures, yet many deserve them. I will sell you all of Hades, if you wish, — all for ten gold liras, and then you shall feel the flames of hell to your soul's content."

"The bargain is finished," said the stranger, and hastily counting out the ten gold liras, he deposited them on the divan by the side of the astonished priest.

Abdullah, excited by the shining gold coming so unexpectedly from a source which he had considered financially unproductive, and fearing that the stranger might regret his rashness and demand the return of his money, lost no time in making out the deed, and affixing to it his ponderous seal. In an instant he had delivered the deed, conveying to the stranger the entire part of the future world known as Hades, to be his, and for his own exclusive use, forever. The stranger, apparently elated with his undesirable possession, withdrew, while Abdullah, clapping his hands to summon the servant with coffee, gave vent to hoarse chuckles of delight.

The next morning as the sun was rising above the horizon to awaken with its first hot rays the people who were sleeping upon the house tops, Abdullah arose from his bed, and pausing a moment to look down into the street and to the valley below, he saw approaching along the road from the east, a band of pilgrims. It was with a feeling akin to pride that he surveyed them, for it was he, the commissioner of Allah, the dispenser of Paradise to the Faithful, whom they sought, and he began to estimate the number of liras which they would likely add to his wealth. At least their early appearance augured a prosperous day. They began to climb the hill upon which the village stood. Hastening down the path as if to meet them was the stranger who, the evening before, had purchased the deed of Hades. Abdullah saw him, and recalling the ten gold liras, laughed aloud. "Why should he be hurrying to meet the pilgrims?" he mused. "Would he divide Hades up and sell it to them bit by bit? Few customers would he find." Amused at the idea, again he laughed. Though the sun was sending its hot rays down upon his old bald head, he waited, for something in him seemed to say that the unexpected was about to happen.

The possessor of Hades saluted the leader of the approaching band, and greeting him with a pious "*mer habba*" with which only devout Moslems greet each other, he stopped as if he would speak. The band halted, and gathered about him. Abdullah, still

upon his house top, bent forward to catch the words which passed between them.

"Whence?" asked the owner of Hades, with the usual Oriental bluntness.

"From Persia," replied the leader of the band.

"Whither?" he asked again, though the green flag, now resting on the ground, might have told him.

"To the sacred Mecca, if Allah be willing," replied the leader. "The heat of the day we shall pass here that we may visit the priest Abdullah."

"Wherefore?" was the third question of the owner of Hades.

"That we may receive the blessing of the holy man, and purchase for us a place in Paradise, as it is fitting that pilgrims who pass this way should do."

"It is no longer fitting that you spend your money with Abdullah. Listen and learn that Allah will receive you, though you have purchased no place in Paradise."

The pilgrims, with mouths wide open, gazed in astonishment. For a moment they seemed as if about to hasten from the presence of one who could question the divine commission of the priest, but the stranger, quickly drawing from his gown the deed of Hades, and opening it, displayed before the wondering band the impressive, well known seal of Abdullah. The pilgrims gazed with increased astonishment.

"What is it?" asked the leader, trembling with agitation.

"It is a deed of Hades," was the solemn reply. The pilgrims with faces white with fear shrank away as if the deed were the very place which it described.

"Fear not," continued the stranger; "I have purchased Hades."

The fear of the pilgrims turned to consternation as they began to suspect that the stranger before them was Iblis himself, who had come to drag them to the eternal place of torture. Had their trembling limbs not refused them service, they would have dashed down the hill for safety.

"Fear not," repeated the stranger. "I have purchased Hades that none of the Faithful may suffer there. Hades is mine, and no believer shall enter it."

The pilgrims, though somewhat reassured, gasped at the idea.

"I shall admit none of the Faithful," repeated the stranger. "Hades shall be reserved for the unbelieving Christians and Jews. Henceforth every Moslem must go to Paradise, even though he has not purchased of Abdullah a place where he may dwell."

"How is that, brother?" cried the pilgrims.

"Go not to Abdullah, the priest," advised the stranger. "What he would sell you is only that which Allah has already given you for your own. You are Moslems, and never again shall a Moslem enter Hades, for it is mine. Where then, if not to Paradise, can you go? Keep your money and continue in peace on your way to Mecca."

The astonishment of the pilgrims now turned to momentary doubt. They stared at the open deed of Hades, and though they could not read it, they recognized the impressive seal, and believed. Paradise was certainly theirs. The leader, to express his joy at the great discovery, broke out into song, while his followers joined in the refrain.

"Paradise is ours, — for Hades is sold to another.

"Paradise is ours, — for Hades is sold to another."

The words, rising on the quiet morning air, and repeated a thousand times, struck heavily on the ears of the priest Abdullah; they seemed to pierce his soul like a knife. Unmindful of the hot sun, he remained on the roof, to see if the pilgrims should pass his door, but not one of the band stopped to purchase a place in Paradise, and it slowly dawned upon him that, when he sold to the stranger the deed of Hades, he had ruined his own business. From his roof he watched other bands of pilgrims as they approached the town that day. The stranger, with the deed of Hades in his hand, always stood by the roadside, explaining to them all that they no longer need to purchase for themselves places in Paradise. Abdullah's sales therefore rapidly decreased, and finally they ceased altogether. Try as he would to retrieve his ruined business, it was in vain. Even his Friday sermons, asserting that the Faithful still had need to assure themselves of a place in Paradise, and his denunciations of the stranger seemed, even to the Moslems, to be lacking in logic. All his words fell on unbelieving ears.

Thus the days passed, sorrowful days for Abdullah. At last, in his despair, he sent for the stranger who was ruining his enterprise. Early the next morning he had hardly taken his place on his divan, to sip his coffee and to meditate on the poor state of his affairs, when the possessor of Hades entered, and saluting, squatted on the ground before him.

"You have sent for me," he said, when the servant had served him with coffee and a lighted cigarette. "I have come; what would you have of me?"

"The deed of Hades, I would have," replied the priest. "It can be of little service to you. Here are the ten gold liras for which you purchased it. I would not retain your money for a useless thing, nor would I have a brother Moslem endure the punishments of Hades which were destined for Jews and Christians. Take back your gold, for the deed may only do you harm."

"O priest Abdullah, I would retain the deed, for I have no fear of the evil which you mention, nor do I need the gold."

"I would add a lira to the ten which you gave me, should you seek a profit," said the benevolent priest.

"Double the gold and make it twenty liras, and still I should deem the price for all of Hades slight indeed," was the reply.

"I would even give you twenty liras for the deed."

"No, not for twenty, not even for a hundred," said the stranger.

An expression of alarm spread over Abdullah's usually expressionless face. His excited gestures but feebly suggested his agitation within. A hundred liras would not purchase that which he had gladly sold for ten! He uttered an exclamation of disgust at the thought.

It was a fierce battle which was waged that day in Abdullah's chamber. It began in the morning and continued until sunset. The price of Hades rose rapidly, from ten liras to a hundred, and then the price was doubled and doubled again. Strange words came to the ears of those who listened without; sometimes they were words of anger, sometimes begging words, but the price of Hades still grew. When the sun had reached the zenith, the thousand liras which the priest had offered were refused, and the battle continued. At last, just as the sun sank beneath the horizon, Abdullah won the fight, but at what a price! He counted out

the 10,000 liras, all that he had saved during his days of prosperity, and eagerly he seized the paper which they had re-purchased. In the semi-darkness of the chamber the flame from a burning paper suddenly flared up, and the smoke curled about the ceiling as if searching to find its way out through the cracks, and off into space to the Hades to which it belonged. Ten thousand liras for the few gray ashes on the ground! moaned the priest, yet even thus he was happy.

"Plots in Paradise, or else to Hades with you!" Thus Abdullah might have called out to the passing pilgrims, but he preferred to make the same announcement with politer words in the mosque. The report that Hades had reverted to its original owner was spread over the desert, and the pilgrims again frequented Abdullah's house in ever increasing numbers. Building lots in Paradise increased in value, owing to the demand, but even at the advanced price, so Abdullah explained, there was little profit. Would you be sure of an eternal abode in Paradise, then cross over the great Arabian desert to the town of Samarra on the shore of the Tigris, not far from the old city of Bagdad, and you may purchase of the good priest Abdullah, a large corner lot, or an inner lot, or standing room, or a little spot just large enough for the sole of a single foot, and there in a heaven of your own, your soul may rest in peace forever.

# On Purple Mountain.*

BY HELEN NOÉ.

IM'S wife threw more wood on the fire and opened the drafts, and the roaring of the flames up the chimney mingled intermittently with the howling wind. Although it was only four o'clock in the afternoon, twilight obscured the surrounding mountains, and a depressing gloom filled the room. Meg went restlessly about her work, stopping now and then to look out at the whirling snow, blowing in great drifts across the window.

The cabin was well built, for that wild region, but the storm had drifted light snow between the logs in regular lines, like lace insertion. The warmth of the fire made little impression on the chill air, and Meg shivered as she glanced uneasily at the wood piled beside the stove — it had diminished astonishingly since morning.

"I must keep a good fire — if Jim gets back to-night he will be half frozen," she said, thoughtfully — she had acquired a habit of talking to herself during long lonely hours. Their clearing was off the mountain trail, and they had no neighbors near enough for company. When the silence of the cabin became oppressive, Meg would go down to the gulch where Jim was digging. As she watched his work she evinced no sign of anxiety or loneliness. His patient efforts were a source of unflagging interest. If he struck it rich, they were going "back to God's Country" and the fact that they had met with little success did not dampen her enthusiasm. Winter was now drawing in and they were preparing for the long months of waiting for spring.

Jim had started at dawn for a mining town some miles away. Looking from the window, Meg knew she could not expect him that night, unless he had started back as soon as he saw the com-

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ing storm. It had begun at noon — drifting in long trailing mists across the valley and whirling icy flakes in blinding eddies. Every hour it gained in fury, already familiar landmarks were obliterated, and by dark traveling would be difficult, if not impossible.

A mental calculation of the fire's appetite showed that it was consuming fuel at an alarming rate. Wood, split and corded, was only a few yards from the cabin door, but in a blizzard even that distance was formidable. Jim would have tucked the shed under the cabin eaves, had Meg not protested. Having all outdoors for a wood yard, she wanted the space around her home for mountain flowers that sprang up of their own accord in the early spring. Her flower garden did not seem too dearly bought, as she wound her head in a woolen shawl, determined to cross the clearing for the wood.

With the opening of the door, the storm's violence suggested adventure. An exhilaration of conquest urged her through the drifts, still as light as wool, and she frisked among them like a kitten. Once out of shelter of the cabin, a great gust fairly lifted her from her feet, bearing her in the path of the gale and she crouched down, laughing at her helplessness. Drifting snow completely hid the cabin and she might have been in the middle of a wide plain, for all sign of surrounding objects.

The blinding swirl was only momentary, but as Meg waited irresolute, a distinct sound came to her through the white cloud. Instantly alert, she listened for its repetition — for some clew to its significance — but her ears were filled with the cry of the shrieking storm.

Though she half doubted her senses, Meg was conscious of an inexplicable fear. *She felt that she was not alone.*

Hastily piling the wood to her shoulder, she hurried back to the cabin. The door had been carefully closed, but as she balanced herself against it to free her hand for the latch, it gave with her weight.

Dropping the wood, Meg glanced quickly about. The floor was wet with prints of a boot, but the thought that Jim had returned was instantly checked — an unknown man was regarding her curiously, from the inner room. As she met his eyes he

came toward her, his whole appearance suggesting uncontrolled excitement.

"Who are you — what are you doing here?" Meg demanded. The light had gone out of the room, leaving a gray shadow between them.

"He's after me — but I gave him the slip!"

"Who's after you — what do you mean?" she steadied her voice, meeting his wavering glance without fear.

"Bill's after me, Lady," he repeated monotonously, "but we'll be ready for him! We'll kill him fast enough!" — his features were distorted by a hideous grin.

Little prickles of horror went over her — *the man was mad!*

She shrank to the door, but with the nimbleness of a cat he was before her. Holding it ajar he looked out into the storm.

By the pale light he appeared haggard with famine, his rough clothes were weather-stained and bedraggled, as from the exposure of weeks, and a trail of water dripped from his flannels and ran along the floor.

Several times he spoke to Meg over his shoulder, but his words were lost in the roar of the wind. After minutes that seemed to her interminable, he reluctantly closed the door, and drawing a chair before it, sat down with the evident intention of blocking the way. Now Meg could only leave by strategy.

In those moments of suspense the chances of escape had run through her brain, but she knew that, were she successful in eluding his watchfulness, it would be impossible to find her way through the bewildering drifts. Besides, there would remain the danger to Jim — he must be warned. He would be no match for the great stature of the lunatic, even without its strength of madness. If he had started before the height of the storm, he would reach home in a few hours. As this thought revolved in her mind, Meg had become oblivious of her own danger and instant resolution fortified her. With assumed calmness she lifted the stove lid and put more wood on the fire, watching the man furtively for a sign of his mood. Reassured by his apparent indifference to her actions, she lit the lamp and endeavored to go about the room as usual, but a sensation of physical fear weighted her limbs.

As the bright light flashed through the room the man's eyes followed it with lightning rapidity. Though the furniture was rude, it was not without comfort. The home-built chairs and tables were Meg's pride — she had helped Jim make them during their first winter on the mountain. In a rack along the wall, her shining tins reflected the lamp's light. As his eyes caught their glisten, the man cautiously crossed to them, touching first one and then another, like a curious child. Meg chilled. Just below the tins hung a knife rack, holding two cruel-looking blades. The maniac noticed them as soon as Meg. Smiling cunningly, he took one in his hands and ran his finger along its edge. Still clutching it nervously, he slunk back to the door and peered out into the dusk.

He stood motionless so long that Meg sickened with suspense. Was his hideous mind planning some new proceeding? The thought terrified her that he might rush into the storm and meet Jim returning. Anxiety to keep him where she could warn Jim was now as strong as her fear of his presence. With no definite purpose she moved toward him:

At the sound he turned quickly, fingering the weapon. "We'll kill him all right," he said with a horrid leer.

"Shut the door till you have sharpened the knife," she bade him, her set face betraying her agitation. Though regarding her with suspicion, he obeyed, her words evidently conveying a suggestion. He began to sharpen the blade, running it fondly over his boot and testing its edge with grinning satisfaction.

Fearing to move from place to place, Meg took up her knitting. The work was mechanical, and this show of occupation gave her opportunity to watch him unnoticed, while her brain sought means to meet his cunning.

So long as he considered her an accomplice her personal danger was slight, but she did not know at what moment his mind would veer. The knife he was sharpening so carefully seemed to delight him; his eyes glittered ominously at each new trial of its edge. At times he stopped, listening intently. The wind was dying down and the sudden roar of an occasional gust startled him.

This fear of sudden sound seemed acute. He watched the rat-

ling door latch as if it were alive; its irritating noise tantalized him. Trying to silence it he held his hand over the restless tongue, but this interrupted his work. With curious sequence of thought, he drew a worsted scarf from his pocket and carefully muffled the latch.

Meg started from her chair — she had tied that scarf around Jim's neck hours before!

"Where did you get that? Speak, where did you get it? Tell me!"

The madman grinned like an automaton; neither her words nor attitude made the slightest impression.

With a distracted gesture she tried to tear it from the latch, but his hand fell over hers like iron and he wrenched it away with a force that threw her, reeling, across the room.

She stood looking at him, baffled — her body shaken by painful gasps. Every nerve struggled with impotent desire to wrest the truth from his vacant brain. She herself had knitted that scarf — there was no mistaking the hit-and-miss stitch into which she had woven so many thoughts of Jim! Jim was where? Through her mind went visions of a struggle in the lonely road — Jim handicapped by his great skin coat — this man a demon of malignant strength.

The flurry over, apparently oblivious of her presence, the man was amusing himself with muttered soliloquies, staring into space.

There was the absolute silence that follows a storm — as if noise had left in the wake of the wind.

Suddenly, cheered by the light, Meg's canary burst into shrill of song. The lunatic's eyes gleamed threateningly and as the piercing notes rose higher the tense lines of his face showed the strain of tortured nerves.

For a while he watched it as if fascinated — glancing slyly at Meg as if she were in some way responsible for the excruciating sound.

He seemed undetermined as to how he might silence the tormentor.

Presently he approached the cage — stealthily — his eyes fastened upon the bird's throbbing throat. Meg watched him with fear — all the evil of his spirit was centered in his eyes. As

a cat springs at his victim, he lunged against the cage and with a wild cry dashed it to the floor.

The bird, liberated, flew helplessly here and there, fluttering in terror. Its escape aroused all the dormant fury of the man's mania. Cursing its illusive flight he sprang after it, his excitement rising to frenzy.

Jim's wife was not a strong woman, but she had courage. She knew that some act of violence must follow this outbreak. Stooping down without turning her eyes, she grasped a stick of firewood. As the exhausted bird fell, the maniac made a wild swoop after it, stumbling to the floor. At this instant Meg brought the heavy stick down upon his head. He sank senseless.

Terrified at her own deed she wavered, feeling sick and faint, but there was no time for retrospection — her peril was still imminent.

She believed that the man was only stunned, and his return to consciousness might be but a matter of moments. To have killed him then and there would have been easy, but, if her fright suggested such a solution, Meg repudiated it with horror. Once securely bound he would be harmless, and might return to his senses whenever he pleased.

She had cord thick enough to bind his hands, but there was no rope of any strength in the cabin. The clothes line was old and might give with any sudden force. In the meanwhile time was slipping.

Searching helplessly through the rooms, Meg's eyes fell on her shawl; it was long and heavy — the best thing at hand. With the strength of fear she rolled the man upon it and wound it around him, fastening it with the clothes line, as if he were a mummy.

Quickly as she worked, it was night when she sank exhausted into her chair before the stove. The man showed no sign of returning consciousness, yet the menace of that inanimate bundle terrified her.

Only fitful gusts stirred the silence. Meg replenished the fire, placing the wood carefully as if afraid to awaken the madman. The bird, subdued and quiet, hopped from place to place noiselessly, but the comfort of its mere presence helped her to

keep her equipoise. Afterward she was told many things that she might have done — but she did none of them.

Sitting motionless she listened for sounds of Jim. It was possible that he had taken off the scarf and lost it — this thought recurred with cheering persistence. Jim hated to be muffled up, and it was quite possible that he had unwound the scarf as soon as he was out of her sight.

If he were safe she could forgive him even that! The "if" tortured her vigil.

An hour ticked away, each minute dragging like many. The clock struck in hesitating, asthmatic notes. Turning, Meg met the eyes of the man fixed upon her. The shock contracted her throat and she stared back at him.

"Where am I?" he asked, wonderingly, "What is this infernal thing round me?" Though his speech was faint, it held the undoubted expression of sanity.

"You're in Jim Breen's cabin on Purple Mountain, — you come here mad," answered Meg, slowly.

For a while he lay silent — it was evidently an effort to digest this information. Meg waited with the patience of utter exhaustion.

"I'm starving," he said, simply, after what seemed an interminable interval.

Without remark she roused her nerveless muscles and deftly prepared food. Her motions were dazed, and she went about the work like a sleep walker. Approaching him, she hesitated; it was impossible for him to feed himself unless the ropes were unfastened.

The man moved uneasily: "Let me out of this, will you?" There was a demand in his appeal which she ignored.

"I'll feed you — if you are starving perhaps you'll be thankful." Her determined voice brooked no argument and he ate as she fed him without protest. He was indeed starving — his eyes following her spoon, most unpleasantly suggested his previous excitement; yet he could eat only a few mouthfuls.

After this Meg went about the room with more ease; making things comfortable for Jim's return. She did not speak to the man, but he watched curiously, all she did.

"Be you Jim Breen's wife?"

"What else should I be?" she replied, sharply.

Her asperity did not impress him, but, as one whose thoughts were beyond such trivialities, he reflected further before speaking.

"How did I get here?"

"You came on your feet, I reckon; and now tell me — do you remember anything? Anything — think! Do you remember harming Jim Breen?"

"I never laid eyes on Jim Breen." Her question seemed to arouse some dormant power; "I never harmed no one," he continued firmly; "my pard and I struck it rich. We was half starved, but we worked hard — hard — " he hesitated as if to stay a rush of words.

"We pretty nigh worked ourselves to death — but Bill was determined not to leave until we had a pile to carry with us. We had — ! — a *big* pile! — an' more in sight when we wanted to go back for it. But Bill had a yellow streak in him — he wanted it all. We was coming down the gulch and something hit me from behind. I don't know — I don't know how he done it — that's all I remember. I suppose it turned me daft."

His narrative, given in monotonous tones, was more like a soliloquy than a statement. Meg, following with every nerve strained for some revelation of Jim's place in the story, relaxed in disappointment. Though it was not plain to her, she felt that in some way her blow upon the man's head had restored his reason; but she did not express this idea.

"I must have frightened you some, if I come here luny?"

"You did — some. Meg returned phlegmatically.

"Who tied me up?"

"I did."

"You!"

A warm blush rose to Meg's brow; she moved restlessly beneath his scrutiny.

"Did I hurt you, Lady?" he asked anxiously; "Indeed I wouldn't 'a' done it for nothin' in the world."

"There ain't cause for worry — I guess I can stand being frightened without hurt;" smiling tremulously. With no apparent reason she lit a candle and went into the inner room, leaving

the man to his own company, while she endeavored to occupy herself in aimless puttering.

"Lady!" Although she was wholly aware of his presence, the call startled her strangely; it held mysterious fear.

"I'm done for, Lady," he told her as she stood above him; "I'm all in."

His eyes met hers questioningly, as if seeking denial of his fear; but there was no denying the subtle change that had come over him.

"Are you suffering — what can I do for you?" she hastily loosened his bonds, and putting a pillow under his head, tried to make him comfortable. His lips refused the water she held to them — as if dreading the effort of swallowing.

"It was a big pile," he whispered presently, "an' Bill got it. But there's more — more'n enough for any man — but not for me" he hesitated, "not for Bill neither — Bill won't go there no more — he'd be afraid I'd ha'nt him — Bill's terrible afraid of ha'nts — " his voice trailed; he seemed to be in silent communion with an unseen presence. As Meg watched him a grim gray pallor spread over his face.

Fearfully she knelt beside him, chafing his brow with cool fingers — she was utterly oblivious of everything save that the man seemed to be dying.

Opening his eyes after a brief silence, they met the anxious inquiry of hers. "I'm powerful sorry if I frightened you, Lady — I didn't go to do it — I'm sorry."

Meg felt the quick tears start. "You have no call to be sorry — I guess there's nothing to blame you for."

He regarded her absently; "There's the claim — it's mine — 'fore God it's *all* mine — " his voice strengthened.

"Lady, I give you the claim — you and the kid — " Meg grew scarlet.

"I judge it was a bad thing for you to be frightened, but I'll make up what I can — " again his tones sank to a whisper.

"You better write it down," he continued, after a moment, "there might be some mistake — it ain't under any one's nose. Write it down, Lady, I've not too much time." His face took lines of keenest impatience.

Sitting beside him, Meg wrote his halting directions. They were original in expression, but explicit enough for the thickest intelligence.

"Write down that I give it to you — there won't be no trouble with Bill, but write it and I'll sign."

While she held the paper for his scrawling name, Meg scarcely realized its import. She was dazed with the mystery of death. As the man's fingers relaxed from the pencil, he looked up at her, smiling.

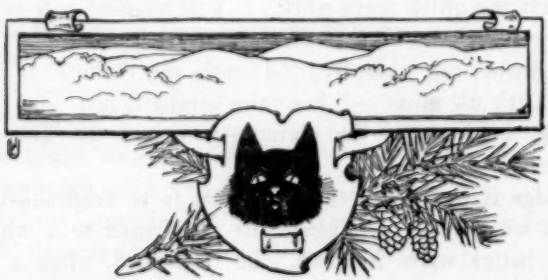
"I guess I've done one good thing," he said.

"I guess you have — I guess you've done more than one," smiling back reassuringly. The soft gratitude of her glance clothed her crude sentence with radiance.

"I've done nothin' bad, but I've not done much good neither — but I would have — I calculated to do quite some." The call of a man and the neigh of a horse interrupted him.

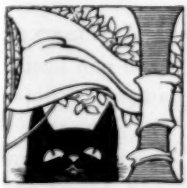
"It's Jim!" she said, answering his eyes. "You *have* done quite some," she quickly added, "you have made one woman happy and a man too, for that matter — 'tain't many can truthfully say that! We were pretty nigh discouraged — I don't know how things would have fell out —" she hesitated — the light in his face was not concerned with things of earth.

"Meg!" Jim's voice, full of life and vigor, called her to her feet — but she had no strength to answer him.



# A Mid-sea Dilemma.*

BY A. H. MORINO.



IT was on an unusually warm and almost windless day in March that the second-class battleship *Oklahoma* came upon the gunboat *Seattle* steering wildly about in mid-ocean, with a weird tale of woe fluttering from her signal halyards. "*Snake Loose. Help!*" was the startling message of the flags. As if to emphasize the urgency of the need, this appeal was supplemented by no less than five inverted ensigns stuck all over the rigging.

The captain of the *Oklahoma* was nonplussed. What sort of help could he offer in a case of this kind? He was no snake-charmer, he said. What the *Seattle* probably needed was a bunch of temperance tracts or, better yet, a package of blank pledges. Nevertheless, a boat was lowered and a crew of Jackies sent over to investigate and render what assistance they could.

When Mr. Hennessy, the lieutenant in charge, boarded the distressed gunboat, he was more puzzled than ever. What seemed to be the entire crew was gathered in little groups on the deck, all staring at a huge snake — a python — which was calmly basking in the warm sunlight on a cleared part of the deck. Deep anxiety and even fear was plainly visible on every face, yet they showed no hostility toward the reptile — they simply watched it *very* closely. Captain Simmons, who commanded the gunboat, received the lieutenant with evident relief, and quickly made him acquainted with the curious situation in which they were placed.

It seemed that the *Seattle*, on her way from Montevideo to New York, had taken on board a live specimen of a rare species of boa or python, found only in the valley of the Rio de la Plata. It had been captured for the New York Zoo, but before finding a permanent home in the snake house there, it was going for a short stay

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at the Smithsonian Institution. The boa at first had been rather sluggish, taking but a languid interest in its surroundings, and had given them little trouble. Later, however, the sea air or the motion of the vessel had aroused it, and finally it had managed to break out of its case and roam around at will. Fortunately, it seemed to be in a very peaceful mood and had not yet offered to attack any one without provocation.

"The python, I believe, is not a poisonous snake," remarked Lieutenant Hennessy. "If enough of you pile on, you can easily secure it and put it back into its cage without any danger. I don't see that you need any help from us."

The captain smiled a mirthless, sickly smile. "You don't know what you're talking about," he said. "You haven't heard the whole story yet. We *can't* handle it roughly. Why, man! that snake is a regular mine! It's full of dynamite!"

"Dynamite!" exclaimed the lieutenant, "why, where could it get dynamite?"

"It was some we were using to kill sharks," explained the captain. "We attached the dynamite to a wire connected with an electric battery, baited it with a piece of salt pork——"

"I see," said the lieutenant. "So the snake swallowed some of the dynamite, eh." He eyed the basking reptile thoughtfully. What was to be done? Though still a young man, he was not without many years of experience at sea. On board the *Oklahoma* he was looked up to by all as a man of much ingenuity and many expedients, yet here was a nut that seemed to be too hard for him to crack.

"Have you tried to chloroform it?" he asked suddenly. A wild hope dawned for a moment in the captain's eye and as quickly died out again; he shook his head mournfully. "No," he said, "but it won't let us get near enough to try it. We thought of shoving it gently on to a piece of sail-cloth and then pulling the whole business overboard, but as soon as any of us came near it began to slam around on the deck——" He shuddered at the thought of what might have happened. "Besides, I don't think we have any chloroform."

"Anyway, it might have hit on the side of the ship and exploded," commented the lieutenant. "That would have been just

as bad as on deck. I've an idea, though. If you could find out where the snake's stomach is loc——"

But he never told his plan, whatever it was. Something happened just then that held him and everybody else spellbound with excitement. The big snake leisurely uncoiled itself and glided to the side railing. Everyone held his breath as it crawled down the rope ladder and landed in the bottom of the *Oklahoma's* boat with a little *thump* that sent every man's heart into his mouth. Captain Simmons wiped the perspiration from his brow and looked at the lieutenant. The lieutenant looked at the captain. "It's our boat," he said uneasily, but the captain gave no heed. He had walked over to the side where the snake had just disappeared, and as he leaned on the railing, he sawed with his pocket-knife at the rope holding the boat fast, till it parted. As the little dancing cockle-shell floated off with its dangerous passenger, a unanimous sigh of relief rose involuntarily from the crew of the *Seattle*.

But the lieutenant did not look very happy. He was still more perturbed when Captain Simmons suddenly disappeared into his cabin and emerged with a rifle, into which he was smilingly slipping a shell. "Can't be helped," he replied to the remonstrating lieutenant, as he carefully aimed at the now distant boat, "the Navy Regulations direct us to destroy all floating mines and other things likely to prove a menace to navigation." He pulled the trigger, and a miniature water-spout off in the distance greatly mystified the watching officers of the *Oklahoma*.

"I wonder why it is," said Fanny Richards to her cousin, as they were returning from their trip to the Brooklyn navy-yard, "that the *Oklahoma* has one boat marked *Seattle*. Is that where it was made?"

# The Devil's Eye.*

BY L. G. POWERS.

FACING one of the main streets of the city of Mobile in the early fifties stood the old Manor House, one of the principal hotels of the town, run by a Frenchman named Nichel, a man of high standing and polished manners, whose popularity made his house much patronized. In the dim light of an early winter morning the body of a man was seen hanging by the neck from the crossbar which held the sign that swung more than thirty feet above the sidewalk. The face was black, the hair dishevelled, the limbs stiffened. The body was cut down by the sheriff, and physicians decided that life had been extinct some hours.

Upon investigation it was found that the man had been acting as agent for a large New York fur company, and had on the day before closed a deal for several hundred dollars' worth of furs and skins, which were even then being loaded upon an outgoing vessel. He had been at the hotel several days and on the evening before had come in about six o'clock and ordered his supper. He had eaten well, drunk well, and more than once during the evening, spent socially with some friends, he had spoken of his recent good fortune and his plans for the future. He had retired to his room about ten o'clock, laughing and joking with the boy who brought up the lights.

His outer garments had been removed, but his private papers, watch and money were in his pockets. One of the leather straps of his trunk was not in its place. This strap had been first made fast to the iron crossbar and the other end buckled around his throat. There could be but one verdict—"SUICIDE."

The body was properly interred and the matter passed.

A few months later a cattle drover from the up-river region

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arrived and was assigned to the East room. After disposing of his cattle at a profitable figure, and procuring a marriage license, he made preparations for an early start through the country upon the morrow. During the evening, while emptying his wine glass with some acquaintances, he spoke of his approaching marriage, and fondly of the girl who was waiting to become his wife. About nine o'clock he ordered lights and followed the boy up to his room. That same night a policeman upon his beat noticed a long, dark shadow upon the moonlit sidewalk, looked up and perceived a long, dark object hanging from the crossbar of the hotel. He raised his lantern, and lo! it was the drover, his hands clutched fast to the bands of his pantaloons—his marriage license and money in his hip pocket.

"Truly, this is extraordinary," exclaimed the mayor, as he climbed the long flights of stairs to make an inventory of the room. "The devil is in it somewhere—but where is he?" He coughed and mopped his face with his handkerchief, for there appeared nothing unusual in the neat-looking room. The people of the city were roused, the room was much visited, and many comments were made—some to the extent of suggesting that Monsieur Nichel take down his iron crossbeam and sign, under the pretext that it inspired people with dangerous ideas.

But Nichel would hear to no such suggestion. "That crossbeam and sign," he exclaimed, angrily, bringing his fist down upon the counter before him, "was placed there by my grandfather more than fifty years ago, and there it shall stay. It harms no one, and those who do not like it need not look above their heads, and then they will not see it."

The body of the drover was encased in a coffin with the word "Apoplexy" plainly marked upon it and shipped upon one of the up-river boats to his home.

The town gradually calmed down, and during the next few months no new event agitated it. The walls of the East room were torn down and replastered and the room refurnished, but it was occupied only when the house was full, and then only by strangers.

Just after the death of the drover, Jacques Marques, a young man with literary aspirations, an empty pocket-book and a col-

legiate education, was employed upon the staff of the Mobile *Advertiser*. The salary he received was by no means princely, and it was necessary for him to live in the most frugal manner, so he took an upper room in an old building overlooking the Manor House Hotel.

It was a small, uncomfortable room, so small that Jacques was forced to step over his bed to reach the only window in the apartment, but it suited him—it was cheap. The view from this only window, too, was magnificent. Below was the busy stream of life while, further out the town, the country, and even the winding line of the river, could be plainly discerned. Upon the roofs of the neighboring houses and under the eaves little birds built their nests, pigeons cooed, and then, rising from their cotes, hovered over the streets and lit down in flocks in the yards of the houses. The flat roof and unusual form of the Manor House were very distinguishable. It was of peculiar form and ornamented with carvings set in teeth not unlike those of a saw. This rather grotesque carving was interwoven in the carvings of the cornices of the windows and doors, but the most remarkable fact, to a careful observer, was that the house opposite reproduced exactly the same sculpture and carvings, even the sign board with its posts and spirals being exactly copied, only the sign upon one building was blank and discolored, while that of the Hotel was clean and neatly painted. One might have thought that the two ancient houses reflected each other except that behind the hotel there was a large oak tree, while the other house stood out in bold relief against the sky and was as silent and dreary as the hotel was noisy and animated.

Perhaps once or twice during the day a heavy door would seem to open itself and a little old woman with a large basket upon her arm, and her hands clenched upon her breast, would go out. To Jacques' vivid imagination here was an existence of good works and pious meditation, and he asked himself many times why the old woman lived alone in the great house and never seemed to have any visitors. More than once he had met her face to face upon the street, and while the small, green eyes, long, thin nose, and withered smile which continually puckered her thin lips did not exactly constitute the face philanthropic,

there was something fantastic about the huge bunches of flowers upon her fine, but very old shawl, and the soft, rich lace of her bonnet, which fell down to her eyebrows.

One day Jacques paused in the street and followed her with his eyes, when she turned suddenly and gave him a look full in the face and made three or four horrible grimaces, and then, letting her head droop, drew her shawl more closely about her, advanced slowly to the heavy door and disappeared behind it.

"She's an old fool!" muttered Jacques. "Good Lord, but it is the height of folly to get interested in her! Yet," meditatively, "I've just got to know something about her, the old wretch!"

This finding out something about her was "easier said than done," for outside of the fact that she lived in the big deserted house, no one seemed to know anything. Even Nichel could only tell that once she had been young and rich, but she had lived abroad and the house had been rented to strangers. Suddenly she had returned, turned the tenants out, and took up her abode here. She never talked to any one, and never had any visitors. The glance the old woman had given him pursued him for some days, and then he ceased to think of her.

One night in early spring Jacques came in as usual about twelve o'clock, very tired from the exertions of the day, flung himself, dressed as he was, upon the bed, and fell asleep. But his slumber was fitful and disturbed, and it seemed as if there was a hand upon his throat. It was a horrible sensation, and he woke with a start, and sprang up. The air of the room seemed close and oppressive, and going to the window he flung it open. For an instant he was transfixed with amazement, and he rubbed his eyes to be sure he was awake. The window of the deserted house was lighted — the blinds wide open. There must be, by the reflection upon the wall, a light in the room opposite. Even as he looked, a figure seemed to leap out into space and hang suspended from the rusty crossbar. The immobility of the figure, after the first convulsive shudder, was terrible. Jacques' tongue seemed freezing between his clenched teeth. He was about to cry out in terror, but, by some incomprehensible attraction, his eye turned upon the window of the deserted house, and he dis-

tinguished confusedly the old woman, crouching at her window in the shadow, and contemplating the body with ecstatic delight.

There was a vertigo of terror. His strength abandoned him and falling back upon his bed he lost consciousness.

It was broad daylight when he recovered, and the fog of the night had penetrated his room and the damp was upon his head and clothes. He could hear a confused murmur of voices in the street below. He went to the window and looked out. There were policemen stationed at the door of the hotel, crowds of people came and went and paused to look in. The women were congregated in groups as well as the men and talking gravely.

Soon an undertaker's wagon drove up with a coffin covered with a black cloth, and after taking it inside came out with it again, and drove slowly down the street. Jacques' head was in a maze. He had seen a man hanging from the crossbar of the deserted house, and, indeed, there was the window still wide open, and even the end of a rope floated from the crossbeam.

When Jacques reached the street, another surprise awaited him. That a man had been hanged he knew, but when he found that an occupant of the East room of the Hotel had hanged himself he could not realize it, for surely he had seen him hanging from the crossbar of the house opposite.

The man was a student just arrived from Cuba, the son of a minister who had come on to complete his medical education, a good student and very ambitious. How could any one suppose that the son of a pastor—himself a professor of the Christian religion—could conceive the idea of hanging himself to a crossbar because an agent and a drover had done so? It was horrible, and a mystery involved in all of this.

"No, no, it is not the crossbar and not the room," declared Jacques, his head in a whirl.

"But you cannot suspect Monsieur Nichel, the most straightforward man in the world?" exclaimed the editor of the *Advertiser,* turning around upon his stool and looking his assistant full in the face, "he is above suspicion."

"No, no, God preserve me from indulging in unjust suspicions," exclaimed Jacques, "but there is an abyss before me. What would you say, if you had clearly seen the body of the

man that was hanged from the Manor House sign, hanging from the crossbar of the house opposite? How would you account for that?

The editor looked hard into the young man's face. "Pure optical dilusion," he said. "How on earth could a body hanging in one place be in another?"

"But," continued Jacques, "I cannot see the hotel sign from my window without leaning out, and I did not lean out."

"I say, Marques," said the editor, "suppose you take a rest for a week or two?—yes, a month! You have been working pretty hard, and—well—I think it best for you. And if I were you I'd hunt me a new room, in a different neighborhood."

Jacques walked out. There was no denying it. Nobody believed what he said, and plainly every one thought his head was not right. He would say no more to any one, and work out the mystery alone as best he could.

During the several days that followed Jacques lost sleep and wandered aimlessly around and then again sought the window to watch the silent house, and sometimes, strange to say, he found himself gazing at the crossbeam with a strange sort of complacency. Then he took to watching the old woman. Never a movement did she make but he was behind her, watching and spying upon her—never losing sight of her. She feigned not to perceive this and went to the butcher's and baker's like any other simple old woman, only hastening her steps and murmuring confused words. At the end of a week he saw that he could not attain his object this way. She was on her guard.

The house was very peculiar in construction, the great courtyard being enclosed on three sides by the wings of the building. The adjoining building had no windows on that side, so that the yard was perfectly private and free from prying eyes. In the adjoining building the windows were close together and extended entirely across the front. One day as Jacques sat, quite in despair, looking across at the opposite building, a luminous idea struck him. If he were in the opposite building in the end room, he could hold a small glass and get a glance into the forbidden domain. He had often done those things when a boy, to catch his comrades in a game.

To his unspeakable joy he found the end room was vacant and he rented it at a reasonable figure and took possession.

Nothing could be more sinister than the den spread out before him—a great courtyard, the slabs of which were covered with moss, in one corner a well, with black, stagnant-looking water, level with the surface; a stairway covered with old shells and refuse cans and boxes. At the farther end was a gallery with a wooden balustrade, and hanging upon it were some old linen and the tick of an old straw mattress. On the first floor to the left the lofty windows of the building looked down upon the covering of stone pipes indicating the kitchen. Only one or two hours during the whole day did the sun shine here, and everything looked moist, moldy, and mildewed.

It was an excessively hot day, and the air was full of the noises of crickets and mosquitoes, when the old woman came in from her morning shopping with her basket upon her arm. She seemed fatigued—almost out of breath. The lace on her bonnet hung down over her nose, and with one hand she grasped the banister and ascended the stair. She crossed the gallery slowly and remained for some time in the kitchen. Then she returned and, taking the broom, brushed up some straw upon the floor, then stopped, and turned her eyes in every direction. Could she by any strange intuition suspect anything? He did not know, but he lowered his mirror and gave up his watch for the day.

In the morning he was again early upon the watch, and the old woman appeared in good spirits, and stood for some time catching flies and feeding them to a spider which had made his web in the corner of the gallery. This seemed to be the only object for which she cherished any affection. There was no dog, no cat, and not even a bird came to rest beneath her roof.

It was remarkable how patient Jacques was. Nothing escaped him. His curiosity was without limit. Days lengthened into weeks, and even Jacques began to falter. She could not be so dangerous as he had supposed. Perhaps he had done her an injustice by his suspicion — and he began making excuses for her.

One lovely afternoon, with his eyes upon the post of observation, he abandoned himself to benevolent reflections, when suddenly the scene changed. The old woman passed through the

gallery with the rapidity of light-footed youth. She was no longer the same person. Her figure was erect. Her jaws were clenched, her glance fixed, her neck distended, and she walked with rapid strides, her gray hair floating behind her.

"What is the matter?" Jacques asked himself. "Surely something out of the common!" But the shades of evening descended upon the old building, and the noises of the city died out, and silence prevailed.

Fatigued and disappointed, Jacques threw himself upon his bed, but as he cast his eyes toward his dormer window he saw that the room opposite was illuminated. A traveler occupied the East room—fatal to strangers. The agitation of the old woman was explained—she had scented a new victim.

There was no sleep for him that night. The rustling of the straw, the nibbling of the mice under the floor, sent nervous chills over him. The light in the room was at length extinguished, but this did not relieve the situation, for it seemed to Jacques that he must watch and guard the life of the unknown.

The gray dawn came into the window before Jacques, worn by the night's vigil, fell asleep. He did not sleep long, however, but by eight o'clock was at his post of observation.

It was nine o'clock when the door upon the gallery opened, and even from the distance he could see the livid pallor upon the cheeks and throat of the old woman. She had a woolen skirt slipped over a short-sleeved chemise, and her reddish gray hair fell around her shoulders. She looked out, seeing nothing in her abstraction. Suddenly she descended the stairs, leaving her old shoes at the foot, and after trying the outer door to see if it were securely fastened, remounted hastily, springing up three or four steps at a time. She rushed in frantic haste into one of the rooms and soon appeared upon the gallery dragging after her what appeared to be the body of a man, clothed apparently as the Cuban student had been.

With surprising dexterity she suspended the hideous object to a beam of the gallery, and descended rapidly to the courtyard to contemplate it. A burst of laughter escaped her, and she remounted and descended the stairs rapidly, laughing and pointing upward.

A noise was heard outside, and the old woman bounded forward, snatched the dummy from where it swung, and carried it off. Then, leaning over the balustrade, with her throat elongated, her eyes flashing, she listened earnestly. The noise was lost in the distance. Then the muscles of her face relaxed, and she drew in deep breaths. She had been frightened. Then she went inside and closed the door.

Jacques was astounded. What did it all mean? The old woman soon left the house with her basket upon her arm. He followed her with his eyes till she turned the corner of the street. She had reassumed the air of a trembling old woman, took short steps, and from time to time turned her head to peer behind her from the corner of her eye.

She was absent fully five hours, and during that time Jacques meditated and wondered. At his window he could see the man that occupied the East room—a lanky, foreign-looking stranger, with a peculiar striped vest and red necktie, and a pipe between his lips.

It was late in the afternoon when the heavy door to the courtyard slammed behind the woman, and she fastened the door behind her and seated herself at the foot of the stairs. She put her basket down before her and drew out some herbs and vegetables, and then a peculiar striped vest, a red necktie, and the complete outfit of the man in the East room.

For a little Jacques was stunned. Then he recollected those precipices which entice with an irresistible power; those wells and pits which the police had been forced to close because men threw themselves into them; the contagion of suicides, robberies, murders; that strange and subtle enticement of example, which makes you yawn because another yawns, suffer because you see another suffer, kill yourself because others kill themselves! It was horrible!

After pondering for some time, Jacques arose and stretched himself. Three victims at least called for vengeance. Yes, at last he was on the right track. He took his hat, counted his small store of money and went out and hunted up an old clothes dealer.

It was six o'clock when he entered the Manor House Hotel and

called for the proprietor, who had long known Jacques, and shook his hand cordially. "What good luck brings you here?" he cried.

"My dear Monsieur Nichel," replied Jacques, "I have a desire to occupy the East room tonight."

The proprietor looked at him distrustfully, but Jacques laughed lightly. "Fear not! I have no desire to hang myself."

"When did you say you wanted the room?" he asked again.

"Tonight."

"Impossible—it is occupied."

"No, it is not," cried a voice just behind the proprietor, "I will not be in the way."

They both turned in surprise and there stood the foreign-looking man. "I have just learned the history of that room," he cried, stuttering with rage, "and you ought to be hanged yourself, sir, for putting people in it."

"Hut, tut, calm yourself!" said the proprietor, "didn't you sleep well there?"

"Happily, I pray, but," raising his hand threateningly—"where would I be now if I had not?"

"Well," said the proprietor, somewhat stupified, "the room is vacant, but I entreat you, do not serve me a bad trick."

"Should I be so foolish, Monsieur, it would be a worse trick for me than for you," laughed Jacques, and giving his bundle to the servant to carry up he installed himself for the time among the drinkers. For a long time he had not been so calm and happy. He had reached the goal.

About ten o'clock Jacques followed the boy up to the third story. "There," he said, pointing his finger to the door, and, putting the light into Jacques' hand, he descended the stairs rapidly.

Jacques opened the door. The East room was like any other hotel room—the ceiling very low, the bed very high. With one glance he explored the interior, and then glided to the window.

Nothing could be seen in the house opposite, only in a distant room a dim light was burning. Some one was on the watch. "All's well," he said, closing the curtain, "I have necessary time."

He opened the packet and put on a woman's bonnet with hanging lace. Then, placing himself before the glass, he painted wrinkles upon his face. Then he put on the dress and a large shawl, and was actually afraid of himself, he was so much like the old woman.

Certainly, after all he had seen of the woman, none of her cunning prudence and adroitness could surprise him, and he was trembling with fear. At the moment the great clock chimed eleven o'clock, he seized the dummy which he had brought in the packet and muffled it in a duplicate of the costume he had on. Then he opened the curtain.

There was a light in the chamber opposite, and it cast its yellow rays upon what appeared to be the figure of the foreign man, crouched on the corner of the bed, with head hanging upon the breast, the wide hat pulled down over the face, the arms limp and the whole aspect that of absolute despair.

The dim light and shadows allowed nothing to be seen but the general effect of the face. The striped vest and red tie were conspicuous. The silence of the night, the complete immobility of the figure; its exhausted, mournful air, were well calculated to take hold of the spectator with strange power. Even though prepared, Jacques was chilled to the bones, and how would it have been with the foreigner to have been surprised unawares? He would have been utterly cast down. Despairing, he would have lost all power of self-control, and the spirit of imitation would have done the rest.

Scarcely had he moved the curtain when he saw the woman at watch behind her window, but she did not see him. He opened his window softly, the window opposite was opened! Then her dummy seemed to rise slowly and advance. Jacques also advanced his dummy and, seizing the light with one hand, with the other he quickly opened the shutters. The old woman and Jacques were face to face. Struck with sudden terror she let her dummy fall, and they stood gazing at each other with almost equal horror. She extended her finger—he extended his. She moved her lips, he agitated his. She breathed a profound sigh and leaned upon her elbow. He did the same.

It is impossible to describe the terrors of the scene. It was a

death-struggle between two wills, two intelligences, two souls, each striving to destroy the other.

After having imitated for some seconds every movement of the woman, he pulled a rope from under his skirt and attached it to the crossbeam.

The old woman gazed at him with gaping mouth. He passed the rope round his neck. Her pupils expanded, lightened; her face was convulsed.

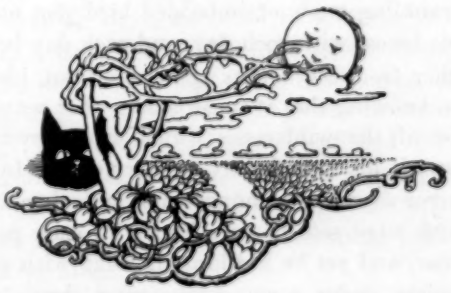
"No, no," she said in a whistling voice.

Jacques' heart had hardened, and he pursued her with the impassiveness of an executioner.

Suddenly she seemed possessed with rage. "Old fool!" she cried, straightening herself up, her hands contracting upon the crossbeam. "Old fool!" He blew out his lamp, stooped like one about to make a vigorous spring, transferred the rope quickly to the neck of the dummy, and precipitated it below.

A terrible cry resounded through the street, and then a silence that was unendurable, and, perspiring in every pore, Jacques slipped out of his disguise and hastened down to the hotel office.

He had been there about five minutes when there was a wild cry. The woman, fascinated by the dummy, her exact image, had sprung from the window, a rope around her neck, and hung suspended from the crossbar.



# The Unwritten Law.*

BY MARY MORRISON.

WET were the leaves and few, and the rain, dripping through the almost bare branches of the trees, was growing colder. The skies were gray, and growing grayer every day. Soon it would be snow which would fall day by day, and the wind that wailed drearily now would shriek and rave wildly through the forest.

It had been a pleasant summer home for crows here on Bullhead pond. Frogs and snakes had been plenty, and Gaunt, the crow, had provided handsomely for his family, until they were all well grown and able to provide for themselves, but the frogs were all down in the deep mud of the lake now, and would not come up until spring, and the snakes had gone into winter quarters. His children had left for more prolific feeding grounds, and he mistrusted they had gone to join their fellows at the roost on Pohannock river. It was time. Last year he had not delayed until this time, but this year, — he hopped dejectedly along a few steps and dragged one mangled, blood-dried wing helplessly over the wet leaves. He would never fly with the flock to the roosting place again. The rankling gnaw of imbedded bird shot ate deeper and deeper into his breast with each day, and each day he skulked farther and farther from the haunts of his brethren, like the coward he had grown, knowing that it must come—that sentence from the unwritten law of the wilderness which every crow knows, and which he knows it his sacred duty to carry out. He felt, instinctively, the horror of cold and hunger and suffering which awaited him, and which were setting over him with each passing day of the waning year, and yet he hid himself away with painful effort, sitting motionless under some overhanging shrub all day until driven out by hunger.

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It was hard to find food. Yesterday he had come upon a mole burrowing along under the loose soil and had clawed him out hungrily. It had been a scanty meal for a maw as empty as his own, but he was grateful. Today he had only been able to find a few dull slugs under the decaying bark of an old log. Soon even these would be locked fast in the grip of the frost. There was nothing so hard to bear as hunger, that he knew, and yet he skulked miserably from day to day and endured its pangs — why, he did not understand, for he could end it all so easily. One call of distress — that was all — and they would all flock to his assistance, his wild comrades. He could not understand the miserable tremor which shook him as he remembered this. Why, he had given the death blow himself, gladly and willingly, when his mate had been stricken blind by kingfishers as she was searching their nest for eggs!

He recalled the fact now, that she too had flown desperately hither and thither in a vain attempt to get away, but they were merciful and did not allow her, poor thing. Of all the terrible things that befall the wild creatures nothing is more to be dreaded than blindness. No crow could turn his back on a blind comrade, nor on one hopelessly disabled.

Nevertheless, he had never cawed a note since the day the hunter's shot had found him. Crows do not lie, and his only safety lay in silence, a safety that was becoming more terrible day by day. If the shot had only found a vital part, as he had hoped those first sickening days, he could have borne it until the end, but now, with a body demanding food as strenuously as when he could wing his way to the top of the tallest tree, this hampering of a crippled wing was terrible. This was the fourteenth day of his suffering. The wound had grown stiff and dry and the shattered bone protruded through the flesh. He pecked at it viciously, but such an agonizing thrill shot through the upper part of his breast that he desisted and sat with drooping head under a leafless shrub of tag alder.

A familiar "Caw! Caw!" sent a shiver of dread to the tip of his bedraggled tail, and he huddled up a little closer under the protecting branches.

It was a cheerful note, and betokened a careless, happy-go-

lucky comrade, who had dawdled about his summer home with a few careless mates like himself.

He alighted on the ground near by to peck at a snail shell which Gaunt could have told him was empty; then his roving eye caught the dull gleam of Gaunt's feathers, and he came nearer with peering, inquisitive gaze which Gaunt would not meet. He sat with closed eyes before this, that during all these days of suffering he had striven to escape.

The stranger flew to the top of a tree and sent forth a loud call. "Caw! Caw! Caw!" It was a command for the gathering of the clan, and presently answers were heard from north and south and east and west, for no crow might hear and disregard this summons.

One and two and three at a time they came and formed a circle about the ragged tag alder bush beneath which Gaunt sat motionless — awaiting that which came swiftly, suddenly with one sharp blow, the execution of the sentence from the unwritten law of the wild creatures.

. . . . . .

"Well, I'll be blowed if that wasn't worth seein'," old Silas Carter said, as he got stiffly up from the muddy bank a few yards distant, where he had been setting muskrat traps.

"I've hearn tell that birds an' anamiles did sich things, but I never spected to see 'em with my own eyes. They made mighty short work of it 'n' no mistake. Well, I s'pose it's the best way, or it wouldn't have been so," he added philosophically, as he turned Gaunt's limp body over with his foot.

# The Fatal Spell of Noah Webster.*

BY ELLIS MEREDITH.

SPIKE MORRIS was sure down on his luck when he blew into town. When I first saw him I hardly knew him for my old friend, but when I saw it was really Spike I loped up kind of gleeful and says, "Howdy, Spike; you look like you are all in." He grabbed my fin, and says, kind of humble, not a bit like the old cocky Spike, "You bet I am — I'm on de hog."

"Well" I says, "come along o' me; let's go have a drink and you'll feel better."

"Nope," he says, a heap reluctant, for he was thinking of the free lunch counter; "I'm on the water-wagon."

"In training?" I says.

Spike grinned and nodded. "Where I've been," he said, "a feller's got to stay in trainin' all the time. Same like a gun in Texas — likely to be wanted any time, sudden — no chance to run off fat er get rid of a jag. Got to be Johnny-on-the-spot."

"Well, you've no objections to food, taken in moderation and according to the Marquis of Queensberry," I says, and a few minutes later Spike was forming himself in a hollow square about the first meal he'd eaten off a table-cloth in two blue moons. When he reached the pie stage I asked him how he came to be up against it so hard, and he says mournful, "I went broke at Carson City. I ought 'a' known better'n to put all me dough on one man, but I ain't talkin'. Don't do no good. But I ain't never goin' to bet on a man that's havin' trouble with his family, not no more. Marital difficulties is all right for the Gouldses and the Marlbroughs, but a hard-workin' bruiser, what's got to fight his way, can't afford domestic infelicity. It gets on to his nerves an' interferes wit' his trainin'."

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Which there's a lot in, when you come to think of it. Meantime I'd been thinking of a scheme, for Spike was really a good fellow, and the man who'd been doing sports on our paper was sure the limit, and the Old Man had fired him that morning. I broke it gentle, but Spike showed signs of sprinting.

"Me be an editor?" he says; "Say, I couldn't edit a bird-cage wid a swearin' parrot in it. I know t'ree languages — English, broken, an' profane — but I can't spell in none of 'em."

"You don't have to write," I explains, for I knew the old man would hire a cheap boy to do that if he could get a man with Spike's knowledge of the ring-side. "You don't have to write — you just sit down and talk. Say, you ought to have seen the story we had on Corbett and Fitz! On the dead, it 'ud kill you! Think of anybody not knowing when one of the biggest things in American history was comin' off. They sent this chap out there a week ahead, and I heard the Boss, the real Head Works you know, coachin' him, but nothing doing. I'd a done better myself, and I'm no walking encyclopædia on pugs. Say, do you think they keep me because I can write? Not me. It 'ud take the thirty-two page illustrated Sunday edition to tell what I don't know about grammar, but when it comes to base-ball fans,—well, that's where I live, and what I don't know about the diamond you could write on the heel of a flea while you were catching it. This man they sent out to Carson could write, all right, but he didn't know any more about pugs than if he'd been the star boarder at the Y. M. C. A. for ten years."

"Dere's guinneys like dat," Spike says. "Poor cheap muts dat don't know a mill from a mill-dam, but cut it out on de job. No matter how bad your last man was, I'd be woise. I wish I could hold it down — this is the first decent grub I' seen in t'ree mont's; beatin' it in de West is different from back in de Great American pie-belt."

To cut it short, I made Spike come along, and when the City Ed. saw he really had the dope he fell on him and gave him a corner to himself and a new desk, and every morning Spike 'ud show up prompt at eight, supremely miserable, but gorgeous in a lay-out of purple and fine linen that would have discouraged the Queen of Sheba twice as much as Solomon ever done. His

favorite suit was a light checked one, of a mustardish cast of countenance, which he wore with a shirt that had pink and white stripes like an awning, and a red necktie; you could hear him coming when he was two blocks off.

He ground out his copy like a man sawing wood, with the sweat dropping off him. He tried dictating, but it was such an agony that he said if he had to do it, he'd try writing. The composing room swore over it fearful, but the story was there, and there wasn't anybody in the sporting field, past or present, whose pedigree wasn't stowed away in Spike's brain, and if his English couldn't have been found in no book, same as mine can't, it was the kind most of his readers understood a heap better than they would have caught on to Emerson or Howells, or them swell guys that get paid for how they write a thing, more than for what they're saying.

And say, the way it took ! Inside of six months every sporting man west of the Missouri was reading Spike's page and betting on his tips, and winning out on them. Most of the boys expected him to quit, though he made good pay, but like all true sports he'd 'a' been ashamed to give up as long as he could stay in the game. A fellow that'll lay down and let the referee count him out is as mean as a man that'll welch on his bets.

And so after a while Spike got to be a real newspaper man, and the other men quit making little playful references to his English when they remembered the figures on his pay-envelope. When money talks, mere literature can go way back and sit down. Spike knew words that Noah Webster never heard of, or Daniel either, and he slung language around with a reckless disregard for consequences that made the rest of us look like a cowardly set of four-flushers.

It was a woman that did for Spike. It always is, as Shakespeare or the Bible or somebody says. We all worked in a long, dingy room, except the women. There was three of them, and they had a kind of kitchen cabinet to themselves, with their own wire, but sometimes, being three of them, they couldn't all get to it at once, and came out to the box in our room, which was next to Spike's desk. Brownie, as we all got to call her, had been doing the society stunt for six weeks before Spike seen her; then

she came floating out to the 'phone one day, and Spike stopped with his pencil in the air and his mouth open, and he didn't get the Faber down or his mouth shut till she had rung off and vanished.

Brownie was one of these fluffy girls, with big brown eyes that was sure alluring when she laughed, and divine when she was in trouble, and dangerous to a fellow's peace all the time. When she looked down on you it was like one of these Christmas card angels, and when she looked up — Gee, it made you feel ten feet tall. She always wore ruffly clothes with ribbons and little jabs of lace let into them. I don't go much on tailor-made girls myself. Of course Jo Harper's all right, and say, she's forgot all Spike never knew about writing; she goes in for the straight-gore, collar-an'-cuffs act, but as a rule the more frills a girl gets on the quicker she has a fellow going South, and Brownie did for Spike the first time she flashed before his glimmers.

Not that he said anything. He couldn't. It was weeks before he got up his courage enough to speak to her. She had drifted out into the local room to sharpen her pencils at the machine and it was broke — it being the end of the week. This is a joke, but newspaper people will understand it. It was summer, and she had on one of these bouquet frocks, flowers and bow-knots and little dotty things all over it, and she didn't want to black up her fingers. There wasn't anybody there except Spike and Miller, who was looking the other way, and of course I wouldn't have been mean enough to spoil the fun. Spike was sweating blood over his stuff, but he looked up and says as natural as he could, "Kin I whittle de carbon fer ye, Miss?" Just off-hand like he says, "Kin I whittle de carbon?"

When she caught on to what he meant, she give him one of these Mother-pin-a-rose-on-me smiles and handed over the pencils. It took him about an hour to sharpen those three pencils, and before he was through she'd made him tell her the story of his life all right. After that he was just dotty; that girl had put bats in his belfry the first round. Do you know what that crazy fool did? He took to reading Society! On the dead, he read the social events column regular, just because she wrote it. Nobody ever did anything sillier than that. And then he got to sidling

into the Society room after the stunts were done, and Brownie and Jo Harper 'ud get him talking.

One night after he'd been handing them a fine line of talk on the fights he'd seen, Brownie says in that ring-dove coo of hers: "It seems so strange, Mr. Morris, liking fighting as well as you do, that you didn't enlist. You'd have made a splendid soldier," she says.

He straightened up; six feet tall he was, and a looker, but he shook his head.

"No," he says, "I like fightin', but I want it accordin' to the London Prize Rules; gate money and all fer fair; no sprintin', no hittin' below de belt an' no welchin' afterward. This war — why there ain't a thing to it but con talk. It ain't fair. No real fightin' man 'ud slug a little fellow, or jump on him out of an alley, or keep on handin' it to him after he was down, or try to get the belt on a draw, but the way I reads it that's all there is to war. What's an ambush anyhow, but hittin' foul? An' when a big government reaches over and swats a little one, — say, it's like takin' candy from a kid. Why, a bruiser that 'ud do a thing like that to a light-weight, him bein' heavy, or even welter, 'ud find it was twice ten plus three fer his and beat the barriers. I like fightin' all right, all right, but Gee! That ain't fightin'. That's buying up the referee an' puttin' brass knuckles in yer gloves. Did you ever hear of a heavy-weight fightin' a light weight, 'cept in war?"

Brownie was a heap impressed, but Miss Jo's eyes twinkled. "Yes," she says, "once, but it was a good while ago."

"Honest?" says Spike, ashamed to be called down on his own profession, especially by a woman. "Funny I don't remember. Must 'a' been some time since?"

"Yes, it was a good while ago," Jo admitted, "and after the big man had whipped pretty much every one, a little fellow, I expect you'd call him a featherweight, came out and challenged."

"Did he, now?" Spike says, all interest. "Was it with gloves?"

"No-o, I think not," she answers, uncertain like. "The big man was the champion, — I think, and he made a general challenge —"

"I know," he says, "A defy to all comers, fer ten thousand dollars and the gate money. And the bantam took it, you say?"

Miss Jo laughed. "Yes, and when his second —"

"Trainer, you mean?" asked Spike.

"Yes, of course, trainer; he wanted the little chap to put on his things, but when he tried them they didn't fit and he didn't like them."

"I know," says Spike. "At first de mits make ye feel like you had puddin's on yer hands. What did the big 'un say?"

"Oh, he said," Miss Jo went feeling around for words like a cat in wet weather, — "he said for the boy to come on and he'd give him to the crows, or something like that."

"Sure thing," nodded Spike, approving. "I'll bet he said 'Come on, young 'un, and get your needin's; here's the man that'll make dog's meat out of ye.' And you say the kid whipped him? How long did he last? Do you remember how heavy the big 'un weighed in?"

"A lot over 200 pounds, nearer 300," says Miss Jo. Spike was clean knocked out, and she went on. "He come to meet the little fellow and there was a big crowd —"

"I'll bet there was," says Spike. "I'll bet the ring-side was full clear up to the ropes. Who refereed it?"

"And the boy got him in the first round!" she finished.

Spike stood up and shouted. "Good fer the kid! Put him to sleep first rattle out of the box; had the big 'un groggy 'fore time was called. The youngster must have been goin' some! Didn't keep the papers, did you? I'd sure like to read it. A fellow like that makes a ten-strike with me. He must have had the high-rollers dead to rights?"

"Yes, he did," she says. "They gave him a pretty good time, for awhile. Fine clothes and swell society and all that, and the women sang songs about him and to him —"

Spike shook his head. "And they got the kid dippy first off; couldn't he be content havin' cigars an' drinks named after him without the vaudeville joinin' the chorus? Well, what happened to him? Did he go back to eatin' feathers?"

"No, he did well for a long time, and then he hit — a foul, you call it? He did something that wasn't fair."

"Say, I'd sure like to read about dat guinny," says Spike, mingled feelings struggling in his voice. "Could you lend me the papers?"

Miss Jo smiled. "It's in the Bible," she says.

For a minute Spike was as speechless as I was feeling. Then he asked, like he hadn't heard right, and I was sure my ears was gone wrong — "The Bible — that's the book what they has in Sunday schools, ain't it? I thought fightin' was all agin' it, and it told ye to turn the other cheek when a bloke soaked yer left eye. Say, Miss Jo — you're kiddin' me."

But Miss Jo said it was true an' he said he was goin' to buy a Bible if he could find one in the market. Next day Brownie come down with a new Oxford, she called it, with all modern improvements to it. "Aw, say, now," stammers Spike, "You didn't go an' blow yourself fer that fer me, did ye? I was goin' to buy one." Brownie give him another of those belladonna glances that made his heart hit his ribs like Corbett going for Fitz's wind, and says, "No, I thought maybe you'd like this one because it was mine; I got it Christmas, but I've got another little old one that I like better. Now tell me your first name so I can write it in it."

Say, I was sorry for Spike. If he ever'd had a first name he'd forgot it, but he couldn't tell her that, looking down into her confiding eyes, as if she expected him to be Reginald or Gerald, or something like that.

"What was the name of the kid that knocked out the big fellow?" he asks, desperate like.

"David?" she says. "Is that your name? Well, I never liked David as well as Jonathan. He was all right."

That give Spike his tip. "That's it," he says, quick. "That's my name. Naw, I wouldn't be called after no fellow that won out on a foul. Say, Miss, is there any way to find things in this book?"

Brownie wrote his name, Jonathan Morris, and give him his first Bible lesson, with the index thing — concordance you call it. He asked her to look up fights, and she read down the list of 'em. "Ain't much there, is there?" he says. "What's that about teachin' yer fingers to fight? I reckon they didn't use gloves them times."

"That was written by the man that killed the heavyweight," explains Brownie, "but you must look up the synonyms, too."

"De which?" Spike says, for those women sure talked funny English sometimes. Miss Jo looks up and frowns. "Mr. Morris, you must get a dictionary," she says; "If you'd read that, you'd know all the English there is, and with Brownie's Bible you'll know the best English there is. Make him look it up, Brownie." Well, he found it with her help, after chasing down a lot of columns of "s-i-n." He read it out, "A word that means the same as another." "Oh, that's easy. Now look for mills, Miss; that's a synonym, all right, all right. I reckon it wouldn't be under Bouts or Events."

Well, they looked and looked, but they didn't find but one thing on mills. "Women at mills!" says Spike. "Gee, I wouldn't stand for that. I don't say a woman hasn't a right to vote or work for pay, but say, I don't want to see no woman at the ringside. It ain't no place for 'em. One of 'em taken and the other left — I wonder how that come."

Well, that was the beginning of Spike's downfall as Sporting Editor. Whenever he wasn't stewing over the sporting pages of other papers he was reading his Bible according to a system of his own, founded on the Queensberry program, with side-lights by Noah Webster. He found a lot of rings in the scriptures, but not of the kind he was used to, and Webster was mighty shy on the roped-in sort. He read up on wars, because that was the nearest to fights he could get, and every now and then, in the middle of his stuff, when it was coming along, right off the reel, he'd sling in some Bible or dictionary English that would knock you clean off the perch, and set all the sports side-stepping to know whether it was a tip or a policy gig. He found little driblets of quotations in the dictionary and he got to running them in, like a cold deck.

Once when he was describing one of these sprinting scrappers, that a real pug can't reach with a telephone, he wrote: "Battel has never learned either to fight the fight or keep the faith. He keeps galloping around the rope so far off from Rysland that the prodigal's father couldn't see him if he was looking for his long-lost son with a field glass. If he ever gets within reach of Rys-

land's right he'll get a jolt that will make that four-flushing daffodil say his Now I lay me."

That wasn't so bad, you know, because by guessing, if you were used to the ring side you could make it out, but when he'd light on all fours on top of one of his classical allusions you could count ten on me. I remember him handing out a hot roast to O'Neill when the kid wouldn't stand up and take his punishment. He rose up to it like a locoed horse and says:

> "Better like Hector on the field to die
> Than like a perfumed Paris, turn and fly."

Wouldn't that beat you? Who were they, anyhow? There never was a man could hand out the dope on a fight like Morris till he began chasing the dictionary and wanting to be able to write like a ten-dollar-a-week reporter, forgetting that he was drawing a salary for knowing things, not for lessons in English rhetoric.

And so his stuff kept getting punker and punker until the old man was about ready to fire him, when the Johnson-Maloney fight was pulled off in our town, and Dan Maloney sent for Spike and offered to double his roll if he'd go on the road for him, thinking his experience in the newspapering line would be a big help in getting advertising. Spike come in looking like the prize-winning colt and seeing there was nobody in the society ring but Brownie he waltzed in and shut the door. He'd got all over being really afraid of girls, and he couldn't any more expect to get the hinkey-dink from Brownie than a white kitten would be expecting the lady that fed it cream and cuddled it up in her neck to break its ibs and chuck it out of the window. Spike couldn't figure it that way at all. He'd heard Brownie say she wanted to travel, so he lopes in to tell her she can put her shoes in his suit-case, and have the state-room on Dan Maloney's special.

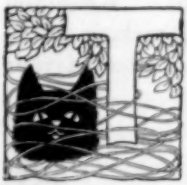
I heard him talking low but earnest for about ten minutes, then she give him a little, "Oh, this is so unexpected" guff and "Couldn't you be a brother to me?" — at least so Miss Jo told me afterwards, and began to cry, and Spike come out, looking like he'd been banting for three months, and slung out his hooks kind of wild. As they come down he struck his pocket, bulging with a roll of copy paper, and it sure made him crazy. He tore it up,

and seeing the typewriter he was learning to maul, he hauled off and hit it one sockdologer that made it look like a bargain day wreck. Then he puts down enough dough to pay for it and slides out, nobody daring to speak to him, and he went off with Maloney the day afterward.

But he was game. When Brownie was tied he sent her a pair of boxing gloves done in white roses, and holding a handful of the posy they call bleeding heart. Now, don't make no mistake about what done for Spike. Men get over being in love fast and frequent. It was Miss Jo and her Bible and dictionary dope that ruined him. I tell you I wouldn't look in no dictionary, not if I couldn't spell cat.

# The Shirt-Maker.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



THE physician spoke bluntly. "You must take a vacation. Get out into the country and do nothing for a few weeks. You have run yourself down with overwork."

"Overwork! Hardly that, doctor. I do not work at all; I read and reflect all day."

The physician's attention was riveted on his patient's haggard face. "Nonsense! You're wearing out, not rusting out."

"As you will, doctor."

Suddenly the physician demanded: "You say you read and reflect all day — what do you do all night?"

"Sleep," was the brief answer.

"Sleep!"

"Yes."

The physician stared incredulously, when the patient leaned forward and spoke rapidly. "I have said I do not work, doctor. That is both true and false. In my waking hours I do nothing in particular. I have a modest but secure income, and I need not lift my hand for a living, but in my sleep no sweatshop slave toils as I do. It begins, it seems, the moment I fall asleep, and all night I am driven without a moment's rest, so that when I awake mornings I am often too tired to get out of bed."

The physician's face had cleared and clouded again during this discovery. "So you work all night in your sleep," he mused. "People don't often do that unless they're overworked daytimes. What kind of work are you engaged at in your sleep?"

"I make cheap shirts." The physician betrayed his astonishment by a start that brought him upright in his chair. "You might call shirt-making a light employment," continued the patient, "and since I rest all day it should not wear me down, but

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I assure you, doctor, I am driven so fiercely at this task that I haven't a moment's rest all night. Then consider the mental strain of the thing. Think of making shirts in your dreams — every night and all night. A man of my tastes and education, making cheap cotton shirts in a sweatshop, month in and month out!"

"Let me get at your meaning clearly." The physician emphasized his recapitulation with forefinger and palm. "When you fall asleep you dream that you are in a sweatshop making shirts, and in the morning you are as exhausted as if the labor of your dreams had been an actual employment?"

"Yes."

"When were you first troubled this way?"

"About four months ago."

"It has continued unremittingly?"

"Yes."

"Did you ever follow the trade of shirt-making?"

"No. I studied for the bar, but have never followed any trade or profession."

"Can you make a shirt while awake?"

"Yes. About a month ago I found that I could cut and sew a shirt while awake. I have learned the trade in my sleep."

The physician snapped his fingers thoughtfully. "Are you troubled with sleep-walking?" he suddenly asked.

"No. Besides, I have tied myself to my bed, so you see I do not get out in my sleep and visit this sweatshop."

"Are there any lapses in your life that you cannot account for? What I mean is, Might you not at some time have followed the trade of shirt-making and have forgotten that fact?"

"No. I can account for my whole life since a child." The patient extended his left hand. "Last night I cut my finger in my sleep. The pain is still there, but you can see there is no cut or scar."

The physician examined the hand. "It is very evident that you don't get out of bed in your sleep and make shirts. It is merely a delusion, but yet it appears to be so intense that these imaginary labors drain your vitality as seriously as if you were actually overworked. A sort of chronic nightmare."

"Do you think it nothing more serious, doctor?"

"Not at all, not at all."

"Then how do you account for the fact that making shirts in my sleep has taught me to make them when awake?"

The physician hesitated. "Why, a cheap shirt is not a very complicated piece of work, and your mind has dwelt so much on shirts and shirt-making that you have grasped the essentials of the trade."

The patient inclined his head gravely. "I hope it is no worse."

"It might aid me did I know your views in this matter," observed the physician.

The other did not speak at once, and when he did it was with a curious hesitancy. "My views, I fear, are as strange as my sickness. This nightly labor seems so real, so actual, that I believe—" he broke off suddenly and questioned, "Doctor, do you think it possible that a man's astral body — I mean that part of him which is finer than flesh and blood yet not so fine as spirit — could leave the physical body, toil in a sweatshop all night making shirts, to return to that physical body in the early morning, and when the man awoke he would think it all a dream?"

The physician's face had grown very thoughtful. "Go on," he said.

"If a man's spirit, after he is dead, is able to move tables and chairs, may not his astral body, while he is alive, have the physical power — energy — stamina — or what you will, to cut and make shirts?"

"Yes, yes; go on."

The patient spoke rapidly. "Doctor, I believe that somewhere in this city there is a sweatshop where every night the astrals of one hundred men and women are compelled by some unholy power to toil like slaves in making shirts for a devil Jew!"

The physician shook his head dubiously. "This is flying kites in the regions of speculation," he said.

"I admit, doctor, it sounds a bit queer. But reflect: I have learned to make shirts in my sleep; I have toiled every night for four months at this wretched business; it is all too real for a dream; while every morning I am exhausted from labor done in my sleep."

"Have you ever located this sweatshop — while awake?"

"No. I have attempted to do so, but failed. But New York is a big city, doctor."

"You have found none of these shirts in the cheap department stores?"

"They are of a common kind. I could scarcely recognize them among others such."

"Why don't you impress on your astral to mark them in some way that you could recognize?" suggested the physician, thinking to drive his patient into a corner of absurdity.

Instead of being offended, the patient grasped eagerly at the suggestion. "I will, doctor, I will!" He unbuttoned his vest. "Look, I'll run the thread across here, making a little triangle. Such a thing is never done, and perhaps the Jew may not notice it."

"You would seem to have more need of a detective than a doctor," said the physician.

"Not so. I have come to you for medicine to make me sleep — sleep so soundly that no power can drag my astral from my body. I must have rest or my brain will snap, and some morning they will find me dead in bed."

The physician arose and touched his patient on the shoulder. "Don't talk of death while there is sleep. I will give you a powerful opiate for a few nights and we may break up this business. Meantime, mark the shirts as you have planned, keep your eyes open for the Jew daytimes, and don't worry."

When the patient had taken his leave the physician shook his head thoughtfully. "He does nothing all day, so nature has put him to work in his sleep. Well, let him do a little worth while and he won't have to do much worth nothing."

It was evident that the physician placed no faith in his patient's fears, and when, a week later, he learned that the man had been found dead in bed, with haggard face and toil-worn body, he still considered the case to have been purely pathological.

But shortly afterwards, as the physician stepped into a large department store to escape a sudden shower, his attention was attracted by a counter piled with men's cheap shirts, and pausing a moment and casually examining one, he was shocked to note that the thread had been worked at the tab in the form of a small tri-

angle, such as his patient had decided upon as a possible means of authenticating his sub-conscious labors.

He purchased the garment and, after the most careful inquiry, for the shirt bore no maker's mark, succeeded in locating the sweatshop where it had been manufactured. But here his search abruptly ended. He found a gang of workmen tearing down the fire-charred ruins of the sweatshop, and inquiry at the nearest fire-station elicited the fact that the building had been gutted by flames the same night that his former patient had died in his bed.

"Do you know the cause of the fire?" he asked.

The fireman scratched his chin. "Guess I do! Got a shock myself. The old boss must have been crazy, up there at two A. M., with every machine going with electricity and not a shirt-cutter or a shirt-sewer in sight. We had to turn the hose on him, to run him out of the place. Never saw such a whiskered old viper! But the boys think it's mighty queer he didn't have any insurance on his sweatshop. Must have been making money pretty easy not to take out an insurance in the fire zone."

The physician turned away slowly, meditating the coincidence of the thing.

# "CATECHISMS"

*Hand to Mouth Hints for those who thirst for the Milk of Human Kindness, and Heart to Heart Talks that will lead them from the Wrong Road into the Right Path.*

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**I have a seven-months-old baby that never cries. It eats, sleeps, laughs, and kicks just like other infants, but hasn't cried once since it was born. My neighbors tell me it isn't healthy. They say crying is necessary for the digestion and development and that it will never attain its growth. What shall I do?** YOUNG MOTHER.

On an empty stomach place the babe on its back in the crib, being careful to centre so that it cannot kick itself on to the floor. Suspend a nursing bottle full of milk from the ceiling in such a way that it will be directly over but not quite within reach of the little one's mouth. Leave alone for two hours. If by that time your babelet doesn't give tongue suspend a second bottle alongside of the first and repeat the operation until at the end of twelve hours six bottles are dangling over the youthful appetite. If the laughter and kicking still continue then you are the mother of a new kind of baby and can tell your neighbors to go to thunder, while you will reap a fortune by having yourself patented and your cryless one copyrighted.

**I read somewhere that one could find a lost article by concentrating the mind on the wish that it be restored. I tried this, but our pet Dachshund who disappeared a week ago has not come back. Will you aid me? When last seen he was following a meat pedler's wagon that passed our house.** DIANA.

The influence of mind over matter is so marvelous that you ought to persevere. Much depends, however, upon the form in which your wishes are sent forth. For example, an African gentleman who for thirty days vainly wished the Lord would send him a chicken finally changed his plea and wished that the Lord would send him after a chicken. He promptly got a turkey. He also got thirty days. Why not wish for the meat pedler. Your pet might be restored to you in that way.

**How is a lemon souffle prepared? I should like to serve something that will please the palate of a wealthy clubman who is to visit us in the country.** DOROTHY.

With a potato masher beat to a jelly one pinch of salt, two sprigs of parsley, one sardine, half a yeast cake, and two lemons. Keep on beating while you add the whites of three eggs and another lemon. Then beat until it begins to rise, when slowly add six thinly sliced strips of bacon, a wine glass full of raisins, and three more lemons. Place in refrigerator for four hours, then, after briskly stirring in one quart of buttermilk, cover securely and let it remain in a hot oven. Serve ham and eggs.

**After washing my face and hands in the room assigned to me in a country house where I was visiting I found that no towels had been provided. Dinner was waiting and there was no means of summoning a servant. What should I have done?** RURAL GUEST.

If your baggage was there, you should have used your other handkerchief. If not, it was your duty to seek your hostess and smilingly apologize for neglecting to bring your own towel.

**Is there such a thing as a home-made feather boa and if so can I make one?** GLADYS.

Yes. First kill a hen of the color you desire the boa. Dry pluck it, being careful to place the feathers in a heap on the floor. Having done this take seven feet of mother's clothes line, coat it thickly with liquid glue and while this application is still moist pull the line through the heap of loose feathers several times. After you have induced as many feathers as possible to adhere hang your boa up to dry. After twenty-four hours it will be ready to wear.

> If a young man should take a girl unawares by kissing her what should she do?
> BELLA.
>
> She should show her displeasure in a dignified way that leaves him in no doubt of it. She has reason to be displeased—for it is a liberty.—*Ladies' Home Journal.*

**Having long suffered from being kissed unawares I followed the above advice but found no relief. I'd like to know how a girl can show her displeasure on a dark night? Although I drew myself up to my full height and with a withering look of scorn tried to "leave him in no doubt," I failed miserably. Do guide me.** BELLA.

Dignified Displeasure looks all right in print, but it won't shoo off a kiss in the dark. If you are determined to remain unkissed never venture out after sundown without a Cleopatra Kiss Fender. This dainty mask of invisible screen is attached under the front brim of the hat and works on the principle of a window shade roller. Upon entering the kissing zone the wearer, by simply pressing a tiny button, causes any kiss, no matter how unawares, to fall harmless at her feet.

**At a wedding in the best society may the bride's mother weep over the loss of her daughter?** JULIETTE.

Tears have gone out of fashion on such occasions, and are now only worn in case the groom is a Duke or a Count.

**A distinguished Oriental scholar who came here to give a reading and gather material for his book on The Inner Life was to dine with us on the second Tuesday after the third Monday in February. On account of Leap Year he got the date mixed and presented himself at the appointed hour on the preceding day, when, in the midst of our preparations to fitly entertain him, we had only picked codfish and ginger cookies. We decided to offer no apology but to explain later. To our consternation our guest, when helped to the solitary dish, "begged to pass the fish course." Mamma has had nervous prostration ever since. Now just what was the proper thing for us to do?** ROSALIND.

You should have politely suggested to your guest that he amuse himself at the piano until the cooky course came on or play with the baby in the interim.